

## Secretive Rightwing Group:

# The Council for National Policy

by Russ Bellant\*

The Council for National Policy (CNP) is a secretive group of the foremost rightwing activists and funders in the United States. Morton Blackwell of the CNP has said, "The policy [of CNP] is that we don't discuss who attends the meetings or what is said." Its membership, meetings, and projects are all secret, even though the group enjoys tax-exempt status. It focuses largely on foreign policy issues.<sup>1</sup>

The Council actually has two related organizations, the Council on National Policy, the tax-exempt 501(c)3 membership group, and CNP, Inc., a 501(c)4 element set up in 1987. The latter group will allow the parent Council to lobby without jeopardizing its tax-exempt status. Since the CNP maintains a very low visibility, it is likely that members lobbying at the behest of CNP or CNP, Inc. will use the names of other groups with which they are affiliated.<sup>2</sup>

Individuals pay \$2,000 per year to be a member of the CNP. For \$5,000, one can become a member of the Council's Board of Governors, which elects the executive committee of CNP. That executive committee then selects the officers on an annual basis. Members of CNP are encouraged to give part of their membership fee to CNP, Inc.<sup>3</sup>

### Origins of the CNP

The origins of the CNP are not found in mainstream conservatism or the traditional Republican Party, but in the nativist and reactionary circles of the Radical Right, including the John Birch Society (JBS). The view on the Radical Right that an organization such as CNP was needed stemmed from their perception that the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) — closely identified with the Rockefeller family — was selling out American interests in the pursuit of an imagined leftwing foreign policy agenda. This conspiratorial critique was begun in earnest about thirty years ago by the John Birch Society. In 1971, the Society promoted *None Dare Call it Conspiracy*, a book that identified the CFR as pro-communist.<sup>4</sup>

\*Russ Bellant is a researcher who has written extensively on the rise of the New Right in the U.S. This article is excerpted from a recent monograph published by Political Research Associates entitled, "The Coors Connection: How Coors Family Philanthropy Undermines Democratic Pluralism." It is available for \$7.50 (Mass. residents add .30 sales tax) from Political Research Associates, 678 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 205, Cambridge, MA 02139.

1. Greg Garland, "North was member of private group once based in Baton Rouge," (Baton Rouge) *State Times*, January 8, 1987, p. 1A; CNP Board of Governors Meeting, List of Member Participants, Dallas, TX, August 17-18, 1984; Executive Committee Meeting, CNP, Baltimore, MD, May 12, 1989.

2. Author's contact with a source close to CNP.

3. Board of Governors Meeting, List of Member Participants, Dallas, TX, August 17-18, 1984; author's contact with a source close to CNP.

4. Gary Allen, *None Dare Call it Conspiracy* (Seal Beach, California: Concord Press, 1971), pp. 87, 98, 105; American Opinion Wholesale Book Division Order Form, March 1972.

The New Right played an important role in the 1980 election of President Ronald Reagan and sought to consolidate its gains by expanding its institutional presence in Washington, DC. New Right leaders created the CNP in part to develop alternative foreign policy initiatives to oppose those offered by the Council on Foreign Relations.

The CNP organizes support for confrontational policies long sought by Radical Rightists and ultra-conservative hawks. Support for the "Reagan Doctrine" of so-called "low-intensity" warfare was one outgrowth of this effort. The CNP also addresses domestic social and cultural issues. In many foreign policy matters and domestic issues, the CNP frequently reflects a slick, updated re-packaging of Birch Society philosophy.

The Birch influence on the political goals of the CNP is significant because the JBS was with CNP from the beginning. Nelson Bunker Hunt, a prime mover in CNP's founding, was on the Birch Society's national council. By 1984, John Birch Society Chairman A. Clifford Barker and Executive Council Member William Cies were CNP members. Other JBS leaders also joined the Council. Five board members of Western Goals, essentially a JBS intelligence-gathering operation — and later used to funnel aid to the Nicaraguan *contras* — joined the CNP as well.<sup>5</sup>

### The CNP Today

The CNP was founded in 1981 when Tim LaHaye, a leader of Moral Majority, proposed the idea to wealthy Texan T. Cullen Davis.<sup>6</sup> Davis contacted billionaire Nelson Bunker Hunt, and from that point on they began recruiting members. By 1984, the Council had 400 members.<sup>7</sup>

Joe and Holly Coors were early members of the CNP. Their names appear on a 1984 confidential list of members. Also on the list is Lt. Colonel Oliver North, retired generals John Singlaub and Gordon Sumner, and other *contra* network supporters such as former ambassador Lewis Tambs, Louis (Woody) Jenkins, and Lynn (L. Francis) Boucheay. Sumner,

5. Harry Hurt, *Texas Rich* (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 369; CNP Board of Governors Meeting, Dallas, TX, August 17-18, 1984; CNP Executive Committee Meeting, Baltimore, MD, May 12, 1989. For connections between CNP and Western Goals, compare CNP Board of Governors list with *Western Goals Report*, Spring 1984, p. ii, listing Western Goals Advisory Board members.

6. Davis gained national headlines during this period because he had just been acquitted of charges of murdering his stepdaughter and masterminding a murder-for-hire scheme.

7. Greg Garland, "Conservative Council for National Policy got off to unlikely start," (Baton Rouge) *State Times*, January 8, 1987, p. 6A; *Newsweek*, July 6, 1981, pp. 48-49, quotes LaHaye, "We must remove all humanists from public office and replace them with pro-moral political leaders." In his newsletter, *Capitol Report*, July 1989, p. 1, LaHaye reiterated this view.



Tambs, Bouchey, and CNP member Frank Aker are also leaders of the Council for Inter-American Security (CIS), a group with ties to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's far-flung political network.<sup>8</sup>

The first president of CNP, from 1981–82, was founder Tim LaHaye, a militant anti-humanist who once criticized Michelangelo and Renaissance art for its nude figures, which he claimed were “the forerunner of the modern humanist's demand for pornography....”

LaHaye and others brought together representatives from the Religious Right, the White House, elected officeholders,



Credit: Free Congress Foundation

**Paul Weyrich, a reactionary rightist, is an influential member of CNP.**

the political Right, and rightwing businessmen. The CNP's first executive director, Louisiana State Representative Woody Jenkins, told members, “I predict that one day before the end of this century, the Council will be so influential that no President, regardless of party or philosophy, will be able to ignore us or our concerns or shut us out of the highest levels of government.”<sup>9</sup>

Council members who are willing to discuss the CNP at all describe its main function as a forum for bringing activists and wealthy funders together to plan projects of mutual interest. One member said that the 1985 campaign to pressure Reagan to fire Secretary of State George Shultz (for not being sufficiently supportive of South Africa) began at a CNP meeting.<sup>10</sup>

Although a former staffer told a Baton Rouge newspaper that Oliver North never directly asked for money, North did make the *contras*' needs known to CNP members. He addressed their quarterly meetings at least three times in the mid-1980s, once distributing pictures of a Nicaraguan airfield. Ellen Garwood, who was active in the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) and donated funds to the *contras*, told the

8. CNP Board of Governors Confidential Mailing List, Baton Rouge, 1984, for use until January 1, 1985; CIS letterhead, May 1989; Inter-American Security Educational Institute Speakers Bureau, no date.

9. *Newsweek*, July 6, 1981, p. 49; (Baton Rouge) *State Times*, January 8, 1987, p. 1A.

10. Author's confidential interview, CNP member.

congressional Iran/*contra* committee that she first met Oliver North at a CNP meeting.<sup>11</sup>

Tom Ellis succeeded LaHaye in 1982 as president of the CNP. Ellis is a top political operative of Jesse Helms, running various political organizations that make up the Helms empire. Ellis was a director of one of the groups which supports the Helms network—the Pioneer Fund, a foundation which financed efforts to prove that African-Americans are genetically inferior to whites. Ellis has said, “The eventual goal of this movement [racial integration] is racial intermarriage and the disappearance of the Negro race by fusing into the white.” While Ellis has since disavowed his segregationist position, his associates in the Helms organizational network are still tied to the Pioneer Fund board and receive Pioneer funds.<sup>12</sup>

Recipients of Pioneer grants have included William Shockley, Arthur Jensen, and Roger Pearson. Pearson has written that “inferior races” should be “exterminated.” All three, and others, were funded during Ellis's directorship on the Pioneer board. Ellis served on the CNP's thirteen-member executive committee with Holly Coors, Paul Weyrich, and Heritage Foundation president Edwin Feulner until June 1989. Oliver North and Reed Larson of the anti-union National Right to Work Committee recently joined the executive committee.<sup>13</sup>

After Ellis's one-year term as president of CNP in 1982–83, he was succeeded by Nelson Bunker Hunt, Pat Robertson, and Richard DeVos of the Amway Corporation. Some of the other board members of the Council for National Policy also have colorful pasts.<sup>14</sup>

#### **CNP and the Free Congress Foundation**

The Free Congress Foundation (FCF), a key New Right organization working on both domestic and foreign policy issues, has substantial ties to the Council for National Policy. FCF's Connie Marshner and eleven of seventeen of the Free Congress directors are also CNP members. Paul Weyrich is the CNP's Secretary-Treasurer.<sup>15</sup>

- Paul Weyrich, established the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, from which evolved the Free Congress Foundation, both political action organizations. Weyrich then established the Heritage Founda-

11. Greg Garland, “North was member of private group once based in Baton Rouge” (Baton Rouge) *State Times*, January 8, 1987, p. 1A; U.S., S. Rept. No. 100–216 and H. Rept. No. 100–433, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair with Supplemental, Minority and Additional Views*, 100th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1987), p. 97.

12. CNP Quarterly Membership Meeting Program, Orlando, FL, February 3–4, 1989; Thomas B. Edsall and David Vise, “CBS Fight a Litmus Test for Conservatives,” *Washington Post*, March 31, 1985, p. A1; Thomas B. Edsall and David Vise, “Battle for CBS Takes On Air of Mudslinging Contest,” *Washington Post*, March 31, 1985, p. A16.

13. *New York Times*, December 11, 1977, p. 76; (Louisville, KY) *Courier-Journal*, October 16, 1977; Pioneer Fund, IRS 990–PF, 1976; Roger Pearson, *Eugenics and Race* (London: Clair Press, 1966), p. 26; CNP Quarterly Membership Meeting Program, Orlando, FL, February 3–4, 1989; *The Five Minute Report*, May 26, 1989.

14. All members of the CNP listed here appear on the Board of Governors Confidential Mailing List, Baton Rouge, 1984; CNP Quarterly Membership Meeting Program, Orlando, FL, February 3–4, 1989.

15. Compare FCF Annual Report, 1988 with CNP Quarterly Membership Meeting Program, Orlando, FL, February 3–4, 1989. For more on FCF see, “The Coors Connection,” Political Research Associates, Cambridge, MA.



tion as a tax-exempt research counterpart to the FCF. He was helped in both these ventures with substantial funding from the Coors Foundation.

- Connie Marshner has participated in activities of the rightwing evangelical Word of God through the Allies for Renewal. Marshner is on the steering committee of the Coalition on Revival (COR) and the executive committee of Anatole Fellowship. She also works with the National Pro-Family Coalition which operates out of FCF offices.
- John D. Beckett, President of Intercessors for America (IFA) and, with Connie Marshner, a member of the COR steering committee. Intercessors' newsletters indicate that the group is involved with shepherding discipleship cult leaders, as does Beckett's COR leadership position. The newsletters also express concerns about Freemasonry.  
IFA directs supporters to pray for Star Wars and "godly" governments and candidates. IFAers were also encouraged to "Pray for the Pretoria government, especially President Botha and President Reagan...," as well as for the Intercessors branch in South Africa. Beckett is also on the CNP's Board of Governors. IFA has been supported by the Coors Foundation.<sup>16</sup>
- Richard DeVos, president of Amway Corporation. Also a member of CNP's executive committee and Board of Governors, DeVos was CNP's president from 1986-88. He was an early backer of behind-the-scenes efforts in the mid-1970s to stimulate the religious Right to make the U.S. "a Christian Republic." Avon Products, in a letter to DeVos rebuffing Amway's attempted takeover of Avon, recently called Amway "morally bankrupt and criminally corrupt," saying also, "Your company is an admitted criminal.... Your corporate culture is marked by zealotry." DeVos also serves on the Chairman's Council of the Conservative Caucus, a group closely allied with rightwing and white supremacist elements in southern Africa. Conservative Caucus spends much of its efforts aiding these elements.<sup>17</sup>
- Thomas A. Roe, one of the fifty-five members of CNP's Board of Governors, and a board member of International Policy Forum (IPF), another group headed by Weyrich. Roe is active in a number of far-Right groups and chairman of the Roe Foundation.<sup>18</sup>
- Richard Shoff, owner of Lincoln Log Homes in North Carolina. A former Ku Klux Klan leader in Indiana, Shoff is a financial supporter of High Frontier, a Star Wars group allied with a tiny occult group headed by Elizabeth Clare Prophet called the Church Universal

16. *Intercessors for America Newsletter*, September 1986; *Intercessors for America Newsletter*, January 1989, p. 1; *Mother Jones*, February/March 1981; COR letterhead, April 1989; Adolph Coors Foundation Annual Report, 1988; CNP Executive Committee Meeting, Baltimore, MD, May 12, 1989.

17. *Detroit Free Press*, May 18, 1989, p. 1; *Mother Jones*, February/March 1981, p. 34; Conservative Caucus letterhead, June 1989.

18. CNP Board of Governors Meeting, List of Member Participants, Dallas, TX, August 17-18, 1984.

and Triumphant. Shoff also supports the Conservative Caucus, a group which cheerleads for the *apartheid* regime in South Africa. Shoff was recently implicated in a questionable fund raising scheme shut down by the Attorney General of Illinois. Funds collected under the name "Children with AIDS Foundation" were slated to support a homophobic rightwing religious activist, Rev. H. Edward Rowe, and a group of private investors, but were allegedly paid to investors and fund raisers, with

---

### IFA directs supporters to pray for Star Wars and "godly" governments and candidates.

---

- no funds spent on any actual projects.<sup>19</sup>
- John McGoff, exposed as a partner in a secret South African government attempt to buy newspapers in the U.S. as covert propaganda outlets. McGoff serves on the editorial advisory board of the *Washington Times* which frequently supports the South African *apartheid* government in news and editorial columns. The *Washington Times*, part of Moon's Unification network, received an award from the Council for National Policy in 1984.<sup>20</sup>
- Don McAlvany, a frequent traveler to South Africa, has held meetings with South African military and police groups to organize pressure to get the South African government to disavow the Alvor accords that ended its warfare against Angola and SWAPO on April 1, 1989.  
While in South Africa, McAlvany suggested that someone might want to kill Archbishop Desmond Tutu, but immediately retracted the statement. He is a contributing editor to the John Birch Society's weekly, *New American*.<sup>21</sup>  
McAlvany said about Tutu, "The least you can do is remove the idiot's passport and not let him travel over to our country, and somebody might want to even shoot

19. *Charlotte Observer*, March 9, 1986; *Indianapolis Star*, March 30, 1973, p. 1. The film, *High Frontier*, produced by the organization High Frontier, credits Lincoln Log Homes with providing financial support for the film. The religious cult, Church Universal and Triumphant (CUT) is discussed in *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 1980, pt. 2, p. 1. In 1988, Gene Vosseler, chairman of CUT Department of Theology, made a nation-wide tour on behalf of High Frontier (*High Frontier Newswatch*, April 1988, p. 8; *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1980, pt. 2, p. 5); AIDS fund raising scheme revealed in *Chicago Sun-Times*, January 21, 1990, p. 22.

20. *New York Times*, March 23, 1988. According to reporter Murray Waas, South Africa bought into a secret partnership arrangement with the *Washington Times* in 1982 (*National Reporter*, Winter 1985, p. 19). McGoff was investigated briefly by the Justice Department for allegedly acting as an unregistered agent of the South African regime, but no charges were filed.

21. *New American*, July 3, 1989, list of contributing editors; *The Nation*, September 26, 1988. See also McAlvany's letter and *The Nation's* reply on November 14, 1988.



him — I repeat that. I don't say shoot him.... Somebody ought to do something to make him stop what he's doing." McAlvanysaid in his letter of complaint that *The Nation* had "attributed to me a most damaging and inaccurate statement, one that does not reflect either my actual views or my complete remarks on the occasion cited."

---

**"True to the letter of Old Testament law, homosexuals...adulterers, blasphemers, astrologers, and others will be executed."**

---

- David Noebel, now with Summit Ministries and a former Associate Evangelist of Billy James Hargis' Christian Crusade, which built itself in part during the 1950s through racist appeals, primarily in the South. Noebel wrote two books in the 1960s: *Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles* and *Rhythm, Riots and Revolution*. The latter book attempted to prove that folk music was a communist plot.<sup>22</sup>
- Robert Weiner, head of Maranatha, a "shepherding discipleship" religious cult. Directs members to do political work for rightist causes and candidates.<sup>23</sup>
- R.J. Rushdoony, ideological leader of the "Christian Reconstruction" movement. Advocates that Christian fundamentalists take "dominion" over the U.S., abolish democracy, and institute the death penalty for children who disobey their parents. According to *Christianity Today*, Rushdoony also believes, "True to the letter of Old Testament law, homosexuals...adulterers, blasphemers, astrologers, and others will be executed." He believes there is no need for the U.S. Constitution and calls democracy a "heresy." Rushdoony was a featured speaker at a 1983 Free Congress Foundation Conference on Criminal Justice Reform. FCF's conference literature described Rushdoony as a "prominent Christian writer."<sup>24</sup>
- Rev. Jerry Falwell, for many years leader of the Moral Majority and major force in the televised evangelical movement.
- Ron Godwin, formerly second in command at Moral Majority, now an executive for the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's *Washington Times* newspaper.<sup>25</sup>
- Morton Blackwell, who also has received Coors support for a number of years, is president of International Policy Forum (IPF). IPF trains rightwing conservatives around the world in New Right political techniques. A long-time associate of Paul Weyrich, who chairs IPF, Blackwell was one of the New Right activists attempting to take over the American Independent Party in 1976. To his credit, he was the foremost voice opposing

22. Gary K. Clabaugh, *Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Co., 1974), pp. 47, 102, 127; *Group Research Report*, July 30, 1963, pp. 55-56; *Group Research Special Report on Dr. Billy James Hargis*, October 10, 1962.

23. *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 1985, p. 1.

24. *Christianity Today*, February 20, 1987, p. 17; FCF Institute for Government and Politics, Conference on Criminal Justice Reform Program, Arlington, VA, September 27, 1983.

25. *Washington Times*, December 7, 1987, p. 5.

the 1976 GOP's electoral collaboration with neo-Nazi cult leader Lyndon LaRouche. Recently, his Leadership Institute has provided political training to members of Maranatha, the shepherding cult.<sup>26</sup>

- Don Wildmon, whose campaign against the movie "Last Temptation of Christ" was charged with using anti-Semitic propaganda, is a member of the steering committee of COR. Wildmon has claimed that Universal Studios is "a company dominated by non-Christians." Wildmon also threatens television networks with boycotts for "indecent" content in their programs.<sup>27</sup>

- Phyllis Schlafly, a leading anti-feminist who first came to national attention as an ardent anti-communist claiming that the Republican Party was controlled by an elaborate conspiracy of bankers and financiers who were assisting a global communist conquest. In *A Choice Not an Echo*, Schlafly says that the "New York kingmakers...some of whom profess to be Republicans...favor aiding and abetting Red Russia."<sup>28</sup>

A figure of special note among unsavory characters in the CNP is Robert K. Brown, publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* (SOF) mercenary magazine. *Soldier of Fortune* has regularly praised pro-Nazi individuals and groups, and promotes the sale of Nazi regalia. SOF started in 1975 in sympathy with the racist regime of Rhodesia. In recent years, SOF staff have trained Salvadoran military units in urban warfare.<sup>29</sup>

While it should not be argued that the CNP is a creation of the Birchers, its very existence is a testament to the success of the JBS goal of creating a rightist counterpoint to established power. The CNP has become a player in mainstream political life in the United States. Ambassadors, prominent public figures such as Milton Friedman, members of Congress and the executive branch have addressed CNP meetings. James Quayle, father of the Vice President, and other key political supporters of Dan Quayle have been nominated for CNP membership, as the Council seeks to expand its influence.<sup>30</sup> The CNP continues to selectively expand its membership. Even though Ronald Reagan is no longer president, the far-right remains a powerful force in U.S. politics. ●

26. *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 1985, p. 1; *The Right Report*, November 19, 1976, pp. 1-3; *The Right Report*, December 17, 1976; *The Right Report*, May 6, 1977; *Human Events*, September 11, 1976, p. 3; CNP Board of Governors Meeting, List of Member Participants, Dallas, TX, August 17-18, 1984.

27. *Boston Globe*, September 14, 1988; *Freedom Writer*, Vol. 6, No. 3; *Manhattan Inc.*, July 1989; COR letterhead, April 1989.

28. Phyllis Schlafly, *A Choice Not an Echo*, 3rd ed. (Alton, Illinois: Pere Marquette Press, 1964), pp. 6, 25-26, 112-113.

29. "O'Duffy's Irish Legion: Blue Shirts and Shamrocks in Spain's Civil War," *Soldier of Fortune*, March 1985, p. 74; *Soldier of Fortune*, August 1984, pp. 50-52; CNP Board of Governors Meeting, List of Member Participants, Dallas, TX, August 17-18, 1984; Brown, who has made donations of at least one hundred dollars for four of the last five years would automatically be considered an associate member of CNP.

30. CNP Executive Committee Meeting, Baltimore, MD, May 12, 1989, election of new members.